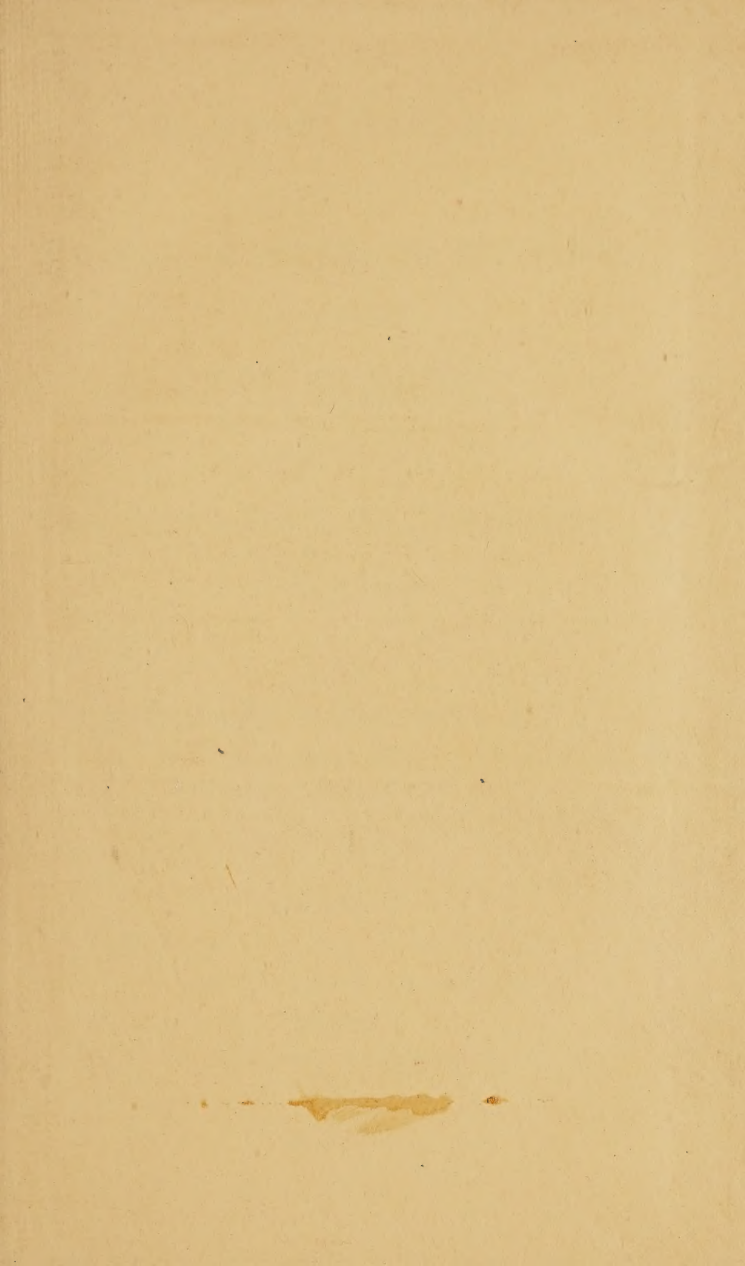


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Some modern difficulties
respecting the facts of



SOME MODERN DIFFICULTIES,
RESPECTING
THE FACTS OF NATURE AND REVELATION,
CONSIDERED IN
FOUR SERMONS
PREACHED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
IN LENT, 1861.

✓ BY THE
REV. JAMES MOORHOUSE, M.A.
OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CURATE OF HORNSEY, MIDDLESEX.

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P R E F A C E.

THESE Sermons are published at the request of several eminent Members of the University, who thought they might be useful at the present crisis. The first discourse is a systematic, and I hope complete, reply to the Essay of the Rev. Baden Powell on Christian Evidences. In that discourse I have stated my reason for not following the Essayist point by point, but I trust it will be found that every important argument is fairly stated, and honestly estimated. The sermon on the Resurrection is in some measure complementary to this, and the two together furnish a tolerably complete view of modern objections to revelation ; so far, at least, as these depend on

particular theories as to the connexion of matter and spirit. Those who are most intimately acquainted with recent developments of the Anglo-German and Anglo-French systems of thought—of morbid spiritualism on the one hand, and exclusive materialism on the other—will be most keenly alive to the importance of determining the connexion indicated; for it is only by a just view of this connexion, that we can escape theoretically from that immoral Pantheism to which the apparently conflicting systems inevitably converge.

My object in these two sermons has been a very definite one; not to draw up a complete and formal reply to systems of thought, which would only be read by the few (and which has been done already by abler hands), but rather to furnish an answer to such applications of those systems as recent events have made interesting to the many. And yet while it was chiefly my object to meet a pressing need, I hope it will be found that in some measure these discourses

have contributed towards the attainment of a more general and permanent result. If, according to my hope, and design, I shall have succeeded in showing that material science furnishes, and can furnish, no grounds for asserting that miracles in general, and the Christian miracles more especially, are physically impossible, then the great barrier to the reception of testimony will be removed, and that unfortunate prejudice will be shown to be unreasonable, which has led too many to seek for such difficulties in the Scriptures, as would justify their rejection.

In the two sermons on the "Temptation" and "Passion," I have endeavoured (I hope reverently) to exhibit the power and wonder of those great facts within the spiritual sphere, which modern theorists have especially sought to discredit. If, through the perusal of these discourses, it should appear, that those things which already, through their connexion, and attestation, recommended themselves as true, now show themselves by their own light to be lovely and Divine—

truths which no less subdue and rejoice the heart, than they satisfy the understanding—then my dearest hope for this publication would be fulfilled in the praise and glory of God.

J. MOORHOUSE.

HORNSEY, *April 2, 1861.*

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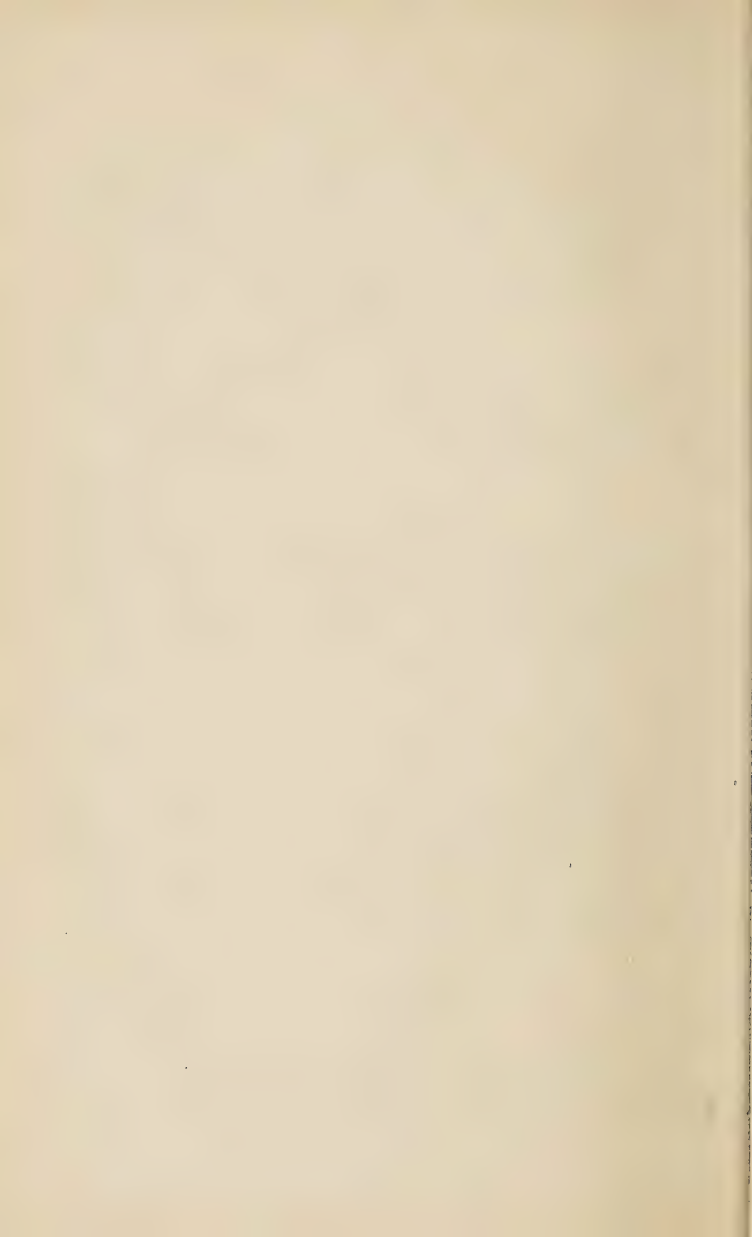
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SERMON I.

MARK IX. 24.

“Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief.”

THE present season will naturally lead me to speak of the three great events in our Redeemer's earthly life—viz. his Temptation, Passion, and Resurrection. All three involve miraculous or supernatural agency, and it seems scarcely possible, in the present state of opinion, to proceed to a positive examination of them, without saying a few words by way of preparation on the antecedent probability of miracles in general, and of the evangelical miracles in particular.

No doubt it is far better to exhibit truth positively than negatively—to reveal the foundations of that which must abide, than merely to display the baselessness of what must shortly vanish away.

But before I proceed to this, the more important object of my discourses, perhaps the exigencies of the present time may excuse a few remarks, very reluctantly offered, of more temporary interest.

In certain theological Essays, which have been of late attracting considerable attention, it must be evident to the most cursory reader, that the dislike (to use no stronger term) of the idea of the supernatural, is not only the strongest feeling expressed or insinuated, but that further, it furnishes to the writers the great motive for their criticism. It is often the only link that binds together their heterogeneous combination of diverse materials, and frequently supplies the only reason for the confused heaping together of particulars which rather obscure than illustrate the apparent subject of discussion. If the ground-plan of the whole book be to discredit the idea of the miraculous—being more or less consciously present to the mind of each writer—then we may account for the otherwise inexplicable fact, that men of power and apparent earnestness should have endeavoured to construct so little, and destroy so much—yea, as if possessed with the very spirit of destructiveness—should so often have sacrificed

clearness to sarcasm, and been content to obscure their own meaning, if by so doing they might suggest an additional doubt.

The utter lack of method which this unfortunate spirit has introduced into their Essays, makes it extremely difficult to catch their whole view of a subject, and in a reasonable compass to give anything like a complete reply. I shall however endeavour to arrange and answer, shortly, the objections of Professor Baden Powell, who, of their whole number, has professed to deal systematically with what I feel to be the master-difficulty of all, viz. the occurrence in the Sacred Scriptures of that miraculous element of which I have spoken.

And first it is important to notice what is tacitly admitted; for we may be sure that in so indiscriminate an attack as that referred to, every position of offence which was thought tenable would be at least temporarily occupied. Professor Powell says,* "The question agitated is not that of mere testimony, of its value, or of its failures. It refers to those antecedent considerations which must govern our entire view of the subject, and which, being dependent on higher laws of belief,

* Essays and Reviews, p. 107.

must be paramount to all attestation, or rather belong to a province distinct from it." With the direct assertion of this sentence we shall have to deal hereafter ; at present I only wish to draw your attention to the ground which by inference it abandons.

It leaves untouched, and we may conclude, from the tone and character of the Essay, because inaccessible, these two propositions (at least with respect to the New Testament, and more especially with reference to the four accounts of our Redeemer's life), that

1st. They are genuine : viz. that they remain substantially such as they were at first written, and are attributed to their true authors ; and,

2d. That the writers of these accounts were honest men, relating nothing but what they believed. This latter proposition is repeatedly admitted in the Essay. Let me explain that not only does the Essayist admit these statements—but as a matter of fact, whether he should admit them or not, they are capable of the most rigid proof, of which such matters admit—and, since Strauss wrote, have been incontestably proved, as against him, by Professor Norton and others. Norton

says truly respecting Strauss's examination of these questions*:—"He discusses the historical evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels in a dissertation occupying about ten pages, of the more than fifteen hundred which compose his work." And adds, "Nothing more superficial was ever put forward by a writer of any note, as the examination of an important subject."

The great assumption which inspires and directs his criticism, is stated explicitly by himself, and is, you will perceive, the same as has been attributed to the authors of "Essays and Reviews."† "The chain of finite causes," he says, "is indissoluble, and a miracle impossible." The desire to establish this preconception on the ruin of the New Testament so pre-occupies his thoughts, that he neglects the preliminary consideration of the genuineness of the Sacred Writings in the manner described; even though he himself admits that "it would be of decisive weight to establish the credibility of the Bible history, if it were proved that it was written by eye-witnesses, or even by contemporaries, in the neighbourhood of the events."‡

* Genuineness of the Gospels, vol. I. p. 74.

† Ibid. p. 73.

‡ Ibid.

Let it be remembered, then, that this last proposition has been conclusively proved, and that therefore, according to Strauss, we have testimony of "decisive weight to establish the credibility of the Bible history."

Professor Powell's criticism must be examined in the light of this admission.

Besides his chief assertion that a miracle is, of its nature, impossible, he employs two notable expedients to escape from what appeared to Strauss the almost inevitable result of his admissions.

One of these is stated as follows :—"What is alleged is a case of the supernatural ; but no testimony can reach to the supernatural ;* . . testimony can only prove an extraordinary, and, perhaps, inexplicable occurrence or phenomenon ; that it is due to supernatural causes is entirely dependent on the previous belief and assumptions of the parties."† This is no doubt true ; and in certain cases a most useful truth. Testimony can only substantiate appearances. A man can only relate what he saw, or heard, or was made aware of. When he further declares that the appearances

* Essays and Reviews, p. 107.

† See also p. 141.

were due to particular causes, he is, beyond doubt, giving us his own impressions on the matter. But if this truth is to be of any service to the Essayist, it must enable him to show that the impressions of Apostles as to the causes of certain phenomena which they relate were certainly or probably wrong. That he finds he can by this distinction discredit the miraculous claims of certain Irvingites is nothing to the purpose. The question still remains,—Are the Gospel miracles of the same character as these, and is the principle applicable, with the same result, to them?

It is admitted that the Gospels are genuine, and their writers honest, and that therefore we must take the phenomena as they represent them. Let us, then, see how far we may be able to eliminate the element of Divine Causation from the explanation of the phenomena of Christ's death and resurrection.

The fact of the Redeemer's death is admitted. Jealous and malignant enemies took care that there was no mistake in that particular; and as little can the fact be denied, that Jesus rose again from the dead. It is admitted that both Jesus and His Apostles were honest, representing nothing but

what they fully believed ; and therefore, we must, at least, conclude from their accounts that they believed Jesus (by whatsoever power) to have truly risen from the dead. Either, then, they were deceived, or what they believed had come to pass.

Could they be deceived? Might not Jesus have been buried in a death-like trance, and, on awaking from that trance, have imagined himself to be raised from the dead? Now, not to mention that this supposition conflicts irreconcilably with the other phenomena of sudden appearances and disappearances reported by the same witnesses as having occurred during the forty days after the resurrection, it is rendered quite impossible by the account of that event which terminated the forty days, namely, the Ascension. The Evangelists say, and therefore we must admit that the phenomenon occurred, that in the presence and view of the assembled Apostles, our Lord visibly ascended out of their sight. Here is a fact which had been referred to by our Saviour during His life, which was witnessed by His Apostles, and is circumstantially related by two Evangelists and the author of the Acts. We must then believe that the Apostles

saw with their eyes the actual ascent of the Lord's visible body,—that was the phenomenon,—and it is followed by the fact that, with their bodily eyes, they never, in this world, saw their Master any more.

I submit that such phenomena only admit of one explanation, namely, that they were caused by a power higher than any which ordinarily operates.

Having thus seen how utterly our writer's first suggestion for the natural explanation of the miracles is shipwrecked against the facts which it is brought to explain, let us now examine the second. He states it thus:—"It by no means follows, supposing we at this day were able to explain what in an ignorant age was regarded as a miracle, that therefore that event was not equally evidential to those immediately addressed. Columbus's prediction of the eclipse to the native islanders was as true an argument to them as if the event had really been supernatural."*

The theory and its illustration are alike remarkable, as showing the desperate shifts to which the writer felt himself compelled to resort in consequence of the admissions previously referred to,

* *Essays and Reviews*, p. 115.

which admissions this method of treatment may convince us were reluctantly conceded to the overpowering force of the arguments which established them.

Let us consider this theory by means of the illustration which fairly and fully represents it.

And first, let it be considered whether there is any ground for analogy between the case of Columbus appearing to work a miracle to the ignorant Indians in consequence of his superior knowledge, and that of performing such stupendous miracles as those we have reviewed.

Columbus was an educated man, of scientific genius, living in a comparatively scientific age, and belonging to a highly-civilized race; and the Indians whom he (shall we not say?) deceived, were an ignorant and superstitious race of barbarians.

If his case offers a fair analogy to that of our blessed Redeemer, we are called upon to believe that a poor peasant of Galilee, who knew not letters, had been able to discover secrets which had eluded the anxious research of the philosophers of any preceding generation; nay, that without the advantage of training or experience,

He had, in a short life of thirty years, eclipsed the glories of all the philosophers and physiologists of the future,—having read even the dark mysteries
* of life, and that so deeply that He knew how to rekindle the vital spark when death had quenched it in His own body ! Add to this, that He communicated this wonderful knowledge, in different degrees, to twelve peasants like himself,—that these afterwards taught a science like it, in kind, to thousands more,—and yet that this immense body of ignorant men (thus suddenly made wiser than any before or since them) so strictly kept their secret that it died with them, and has never since been rediscovered,—and we shall have a tissue of improbabilities more wonderful than any which have been conceived to arise from admitting the Divine Authority of the New Testament ! Add yet further to all this, that to represent Jesus as deliberately leading His Apostles, and others, to believe that He wrought miracles by Divine aid, when He knew they were only due to natural causes, is to charge Him with deliberate falsehood, and to assert that He consummated a life of truth, crowned by an heroic death, for truth, by fearful and blasphemous untruth at the last.

Can we suppose that Professor Powell was wholly ignorant or incognizant of these plain answers to the two theories which have been examined? Perhaps he never took the trouble to follow them out to their inevitable conclusion ; but at least he must have been doubtful of their applicability to the Gospel narratives.

The question, then, naturally occurs,—“ Why employ them ? ” Evidently because he felt embarrassed by the gravity of the admissions he was compelled to make, and wished, if it might be, to weaken the force of those admissions.

We have seen that his attempt entirely fails, and therefore we must assume that, as far as historical evidence can establish a truth, this truth is so established, that real objective variations from the ordinary course of nature have been effected through Divine interposition.

So far, then, it has been shown that external testimony and internal criticism conspire to prove the credibility of the Biblical account of miraculous occurrences. If this result is to be shaken by any considerations touching the nature of a miracle, it is important to remark that nothing less will accomplish this than a demonstration that

miracles are in themselves physically impossible, that is, that they contradict our necessary conclusions respecting the physical government of God.

It is not, therefore, fair, in conducting the latter part of this argument, to ask us to consider the Scripture account of miracles as a mere hypothesis, nor even as a mere presumption, for it has been proved on historical grounds to be not only probably but certainly true.

Therefore it should be remembered that the argument against the credibility of these accounts is constantly labouring under the weight of a previously established probability in their favour, so great in amount that nothing short of the demonstration that miracles are physically impossible will suffice to remove it. That the Essayist once, at least, felt the full force of this assertion will be made evident by his very extraordinary statement of the nature of the question to be discussed.* The proposition that an event may be so intrinsically incredible as to set aside any degree of testimony, does not, he thinks, "affect the honesty or

* Essays and Reviews, p. 106.

veracity of that testimony," but means this, "that from the nature of our antecedent convictions, the probability of some kind of mistake or deception somewhere, though we know not where, is greater than the probability of the event really happening in the way and from the causes assigned."

This very general statement may mean either of two things,—that the subject of the historical credibility of miracles has not been investigated at all, and therefore that we cannot as yet specify the error in evidence, though future examination would be sure to disclose it ; or, it may mean that, as the result of a thorough examination, the Professor feels himself unable to point out any distinct flaw in the evidence, but would rather, in spite of this, assume one somewhere than admit the possibility of a miracle.

If the sentence was meant to convey the former meaning, its assertion is false ; but, if the latter, then, as we have found, it is true, and a truth very damaging to the Professor's argument. For, if he must begin with the admission that he is unable to detect a single flaw in the historical evidence for miracles, then, in order to overturn this moral certainty against him, he is bound to prove absolutely,

and without the possibility of a doubt, that their occurrence is physically impossible.

Before proceeding to the consideration of that proposition which the Essayist thinks sufficient to justify him in affirming the physical impossibility of miracles, it may be well, as tending to clear our conceptions of the ends and place of the miracle, to reply shortly to two objections which have puzzled many.

The first our writer repeats, from Newman's "Phases of Faith,"—"Ought any external testimony to overrule internal conviction? Ought any moral truth to be received in mere obedience to a miracle of sense?"* We reply, undoubtedly not; spiritual truths can be only spiritually apprehended by the help of the Spirit of God. And yet in our present condition miracles may not only be useful but necessary to this result. No doubt if we had continued in primeval purity we might, as easily as Adam, have recognized our Maker's voice in the cool of the day; and no doubt a state of soul is conceivable, so holy and spiritual, that all truth should be directly perceived to be the voice of God. But is it so with us? Is this the condition

* Essays and Reviews, p. 123.

in which we are, and, as a consequence of which, it is asserted that a special Divine Revelation has been furnished to us ?

If we be evil, and our hearts dull and earth-bound, how are we to be quickened to a consciousness of something above the material sphere, if not by a palpable outward token of the subordination of this latter to the spiritual ? And thus, though the miracle cannot, of itself, produce or command spiritual apprehension, it yet may be needful to arouse the drowsy soul, and direct its attention to those truths which, whatever their intrinsic value, it had otherwise failed to apprehend.

These considerations furnish a reply to the second objection referred to, namely, that miracles involve the idea that Infinite Wisdom was obliged to change its plan for an emergency.* When we recognize the fact that man is not a lump of clay, to be dealt with on purely physical principles, that he might rebel and forget, and that in such an event miracles might become a necessary means of his restoration, their occurrence, so far from being

* *Vide* Essays and Reviews, p. 114—"The belief in miracles is irreconcilable with the idea of an Eternal God consistent with Himself."

an indication of imperfect wisdom in the Creator, becomes only a deeper token of that infinite knowledge which foresaw every contingency even in the sphere of human freedom, and of that infinite wisdom which from eternity designed that all circumstances within and without, in the soul and in the world, should be adapted and subordinated to this highest of all objects—the creation in spiritual beings of the image of God.

These objections disposed of, we come now, in conclusion, to notice the only other, and it must be confessed, in the eyes of the Essayist, the most important proposition by which he tries to prove, from a consideration of the nature of the miracle, that its occurrence is a physical impossibility.

It is thus stated,—“The entire range of the inductive philosophy is at once based upon, and in every instance tends to confirm, by immense accumulations of evidence, the grand truth of the universal order and constancy of natural causes, as a primary law of belief, so strongly entertained and fixed in the mind of every truly inductive inquirer, that he cannot even conceive the possibility of its failure.”*

* Essays and Reviews, p. 109.

This is, in other words, an assertion that, to an inductive inquirer, the idea of a variation from the uniformity of material succession is inconceivable. To a certain extent this proposition is true ; let us therefore first endeavour to fix the limits of its application. It is undeniably true that any variation from ordinary succession cannot be conceived as proceeding from forces only existing in the material sphere. All such instances as that of the Indian who, through lack of experience, denied the existence of ice, are beside the mark if cited to prove that miracles might arise from material agency, and are justly ridiculed by the essayist as, on that supposition, proceeding from a mistaken view of the question. They only prove that everything in the physical sphere is under the government of uniform physical law, though men may sometimes be too ignorant to perceive it. They are useful, and it is only just to the eminent men who have cited them to remind you that, by them, they have only been considered useful, as suggesting that we have no business to make our experience the measure of possibility.

Still it is unquestionably true that if there be no world but the material one, physical observation

alone would suggest that variation from uniform physical law is inconceivable.

But now, suppose that, as the result of an accurate observation of the phenomena of mind, we have been forced to the conclusion that, as the basis and source of these phenomena, we are obliged to assume the existence of another substance which we call spirit. Suppose that, after an examination of all that positivists can urge in favour of a physical origin of these phenomena, we are forced to the conclusion that they utterly fail to deduce thought from physical structure, and that therefore it is as arbitrary an assumption to assert that spiritual phenomena are modifications of physical agencies, as it would be to avow that the phenomena of vision were derived from the sense of hearing; then, being obliged to assume a distinct spiritual sphere and spiritual forces, the question necessarily arises, "Is there any connexion between the material and spiritual?"

The answer to this question must determine the conceivableness of miracles—for this is distinctively the characteristic of a miracle—that it is a variation from uniform order occurring in the material sphere, but occasioned by the operation of spiritual

forces. The question is not one between law and disorder, for the Christian distinctly asserts that the spiritual interference arises from the operation of a higher spiritual law, working in harmony with the lower material one, which appears to be deranged. The question is definitely this,—“Is it conceivable that there should be such a connexion between the spiritual and material worlds that the forces of the former may produce variations in the ordinary phenomena of the latter?”

In seeking an answer to this question, let it be remembered that if there should be the least doubt connected with the Essayist's proof that its affirmation contains an impossible conception, his cause is irretrievably lost, for he is pledged to nothing less than absolute demonstration.

There seems left to him only one way of securing this; namely, by the proof that there is no such thing as spirit, and therefore that what is non-existent cannot interfere in the sphere of physical phenomena. Comte and his school have vainly attempted this proof; but, strange to say, Professor Powell does not even adventure it. On the contrary, he admits the existence of spirit, and tries to compass his end by asserting that it is independent of

matter. His words are these : " Certain deductions of science and reason . . . require a similar concession and recognition of the independence of spiritual and physical truth." *

The Essayist's conception seems to be this : There is an order in the material world which is unvarying ; there is a similar order in the spiritual world which is in like manner unvarying ; and these systems are totally unconnected, their events occurring in totally distinct, and, so to speak, parallel planes, which can know no point of contact.

This is his conception ; but where is the proof or indication that it is so necessarily true as not to leave another possible ? This is what we expect, and must find, if we are to give up our moral certainty, already established, that events have actually occurred which make another conception inevitable.

There is no proof forthcoming, for the simple reason that none can be furnished. Professor Powell had been accustomed to confine his attention to observations in the material sphere ; hence he had no eye for anything but the developments

* Essays and Reviews, p. 129.

of material law, and he says in effect, "Because I do not see the connexion indicated, therefore it does not exist; because the spiritual does not always manifest its presence and operation in the material sphere to me, who am not looking for it, therefore it is not ever present in that sphere, and does not operate;" and this enormous assumption is all the proof that is given, that miracles imply a physical impossibility.

In opposition to this there is the fact that the spiritual and material are actually connected in the nature of man, and that in this nature the spiritual does interfere in the sphere of the physical. And should we not therefore expect, from the analogy of our own experience, that in the vast arrangements of God, whose characteristic is, that He is a Spirit, the material would ever be made subordinate to the spiritual; and that since One Ruler orders all events (in either sphere) according to one infinitely wise plan, there might occur periods in the historical developments of God's designs, when, according to His eternal purpose, it might be well that the material should bend to the spiritual, and thus at once indicate the existence and supremacy of this latter? There

is no disharmony here, no clashing of requirements between different systems of law. The discords are deepest harmonies—points of connexion between the commoner and diviner strains—wild melodies which dignify the lower by binding them to the higher, while at the same time they beautify the higher by bending them to the lower, and weaving them with these into divinest music. The wife's obedience of love is her dearest charm; the husband's rule of affection, his irrevocable bond to the partner of his way. So with God's spiritual and material laws; they are wedded together; and miracle is the ring that binds them in the holy bond of divine wisdom and love.

Surely, my brethren, this is a conception of the relation between the spiritual and material more consonant to reason, and more honouring to God, than the miserable assumption of an eternal divorce. And if it be, then not only has the Essayist failed to prove that miracles are a physical impossibility, but it is shown that they involve a worthier conception of the character and works of God than that which was brought to discredit them. And in this case we shall be compelled to admit

that historical and philosophical considerations alike combine to establish the fact, that there have occurred, for the attestation of a divine revelation, miraculous departures from the invariable routine of physical order.

And if this be admitted, then the philosophy of the Essays and Reviews is utterly discredited ; then we must assume the existence of a divine revelation, differing not only in degree but in kind from that vouchsafed to a Shakspeare or a Goethe, or even to a Luther or Augustine ; and then the divine elements in the development of Christian life have not been similarly contributed by Asia, Greece, Rome, and Judæa. Then too, without the support and inspiration of this master-assumption, the Essays and Reviews are left little more than a *caput mortuum* of perverse criticisms, which, for the most part, have been frequently answered both in Germany and England.

In conclusion, let me shortly strengthen what I have already advanced, by suggesting to you that besides their use as evidences of truth and connexions of the material and spiritual, miracles are alike remedial of the disorder of the past, and prophetic of a restoration of that order in the future.

First, they are not subversive of order, but remedial of disorder.

For what are disease, and scarcity, and death, but so many developments of the disorder introduced by sin? And what was the rebuking of fever but the restoration of primitive health? What the multiplying of loaves, but the restoration, as far as its action extended, of primitive fertility and plenty? Yea, what the resurrection of the dead, but the restitution of the life that was once, and shall again be, immortal?

But again: miracles are pledges and prophecies of the future; tokens and specimens of that power of Christ which shall one day restore all things. In this point of view miracles are predictive facts, acted prophecies, typical foreshadowings, realized first-fruits of that rich glorious harvest which after the appointed waiting-time we shall reap at the latter day.

And thus Christ's resurrection was not only an act destructive of the disorder of the past, but predictive, too, of a higher order yet to come—of a hope full of immortality to all who believe in Him to salvation. It is the clear assurance to us all, that our dim aspirations after immortality were

sent by God, that the desire to soar into a higher life is prescient of our fate, and implanted by the spirit of the risen Redeemer.

Thus miracles bind together the past and future—the visible and invisible. To the disobedient they are like the coming forth from the mist of an arm of might, palpable and wielding the lightnings; like the writing of doom on the walls of the feasting-chamber, traced in letters of fire by a man's hand.

To the servant of Christ, they are the apocalypse of his home, the opening of a door in heaven from which streams down to him the glory of the blessed future. They direct him from the outer court to the spiritual verities and glories of the holiest of all; first to the heavenly births, the soul-resurrections which are even now in this trembling ark of Christ, and thence, to the eternal consummation—“to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and (as the dearest reward) to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprink-

ling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Oh! if the brightness of this hope have been dimmed for you, if your head have been perplexed and your heart pained and wearied by the bewildering controversies of our time, let me finally pray you above all to betake yourself to the fountain of all light and comfort, and pour out your doubt and distress in the words of that poor Father who once felt the same distracting conflict of love and fear, and who found peace and rest in the heart-breathed prayer, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

Oh! my brethren, our lot has fallen upon days when it is hard to confess the Redeemer; when it often costs a struggle to say in the drawing-room what we think and feel in the retirement of prayer! Ah! can the brave hearts that rallied so nobly to their country's need, be afraid to confess the dear and blessed Lord? Think how those gentlemen of Lincoln's Inn rushed to the rescue of the great duke, through the midst of a furious London mob!—how, closing round him with stern brows and kindling eyes, they marched through the city with the hero in their midst till they brought him safely

home. Would they ever forget his look and tone, when he bared the hoary head that had grown grey in the deadly hail of a thousand battles, and said to them with quivering lip—he, the iron captain—“Gentlemen, I thank you?” Never as long as they had life! And do you think, that when the hard fight is over, and the trembling bride of Christ has been brought safe through beleaguering enemies to her home, do you think that the faithful soldier of the Cross will ever forget his captain’s “Well done, good and faithful servant”? Not to all eternity! Ah! my brethren, think of that look and that tone before men and angels, and let us all pray that we may be made so faithful to Christ before the judgment-seat of men, that He may not be ashamed of us before the judgment-seat of God.

SERMON II.

MARK I. 12, 13.

“And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him.”

SINCE last I addressed you from this place, we have learnt that it has pleased God to take from the country one of its greatest benefactors.* To those who are aware of the extensive influence exerted by one in the highest station, and who have watched with joy and gratitude the pious and blameless life, the wise and patriotic rule, by which our beloved sovereign has won the hearts and blessed the homes of Englishmen—to those who remember the passionate outburst of loyalty and devotion which at a late grand

* Allusion is here made to the death of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent.

national spectacle astonished the world, and proved that there glowed in the hearts of her people a love for their Queen as deep and chivalrous as ever was found or feigned in the days of old—to those who, remembering these things, believe that they see in them the best pledge for our country of a pure and happy future,—the death of her who, under God, was mainly instrumental in securing to us these blessings, must be an event alike mournful and instructive—mournful, as involving loss and distress to those who are more nearly affected by it, and through them to us all—and instructive, as showing at once how wide an influence one frail human being may exert, and how blessed to all may be its exertion for good.

In this latter point of view, the incident in question, which it was at once my duty and privilege to remember, may not unfitly remind us of the more important event which we have this day to consider. For our Lord's temptation was an event affecting all men, in all time—an instance of the blessedness of self-denying effort for others not to be paralleled save in the incidents of the same life. Before, however, proceeding to the mo.

immediate consideration of this aspect of the subject, it may be convenient, first, to endeavour to get a distinct idea of what is meant by the temptation of our Lord. Our Church holds, in conformity with the teaching of Holy Scripture, that we have three spiritual adversaries, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Attempts have not been wanting, in any age of the Church, to show either that the last of these is only a name for the abstract conception of evil, or if, in consequence of the attributing to Satan of active temptation, this position has seemed no longer tenable, that a personal basis for his existence must be sought, either in the soul which is tempted, or in the evil human beings who have the power of tempting it. The futility of attempts to identify the devil with the world or the flesh is conclusively shown by the account of our Lord's temptation. For, first, that the "Satan" of Scripture is not merely an impersonation for each man of the evil in his own heart, is evident from this—that Christ, in whose heart was no evil, was actually tempted by Satan. And secondly, that the word "Satan" is not merely a collective phrase, to designate the aggregate of evil in the human race, is not less clearly estab-

lished by the statement that in the desert there was no "world" which could be so designated, for "he was alone with the wild beasts."

If then the "Satan" of Scripture cannot represent either the abstract conception of evil, or any of its concrete realisations in the human race, we must assume that the word is employed to designate some spiritual person or persons, not human. While it is of the utmost practical consequence that we should be aware of the existence of superhuman adversaries, it is of less practical moment to determine whether the word "Satan" is the name of the collective hosts of darkness, or of one among them who is eminent for his power, energy, and audacity in evil. There can be no doubt, however, that Scripture teaches the truth of the latter hypothesis; that as the Lord Jesus is the head of His people and the Prince of Peace, so on the other hand there is a prince of "darkness" and leader of the powers of hell.

But while we thus hold that Satan is a real spiritual person, it by no means follows that we should entertain the vulgar and superstitious idea of a visible or revolting shape. We are nowhere told of any bodily appearance, and it is most

unlikely that an astute spirit should disclose his real nature by a frightful similitude, or his actual intentions by a manifest display of them. His children on the earth, who are surely less cunning than the father of lies, spare no pains to conceal their true character and dissemble their real intent. And since our Lord was "in all points tempted like as we are," it is most probable that in this scene in the desert the tempter made his approach invisibly, and presented his propositions in the form of mental suggestions.

At this point, the question would naturally arise, "Is it probable that the temptations are recounted as they were suggested?" The admission that our Lord was "in all points tempted like as we are," will greatly facilitate our reply to this query. We know that a long train of mental suggestions frequently shapes itself towards a definite end, which in turn admits of being represented in a short and characteristic form—if indeed it does not actually take that form as its ultimate and intelligible result. This holds good in our temptations, and it follows that if, in relating any temptation to another, our object be to characterize its nature, rather than its mode of operation, we

should express it in this ultimate form, rather than in that successive series of approximations. When, moreover, we remember that no one witnessed the temptation in the desert, and that therefore either our Lord Himself must have reported it, or it was made the subject of direct special revelation, we must conclude that the temptations are recounted rather as detected and exposed by Christ than as actually presented by Satan.

In illustration of this position let me remind you of our Saviour's reply, when Peter endeavoured to turn Him back from the way of suffering and self-denial. It was not to the human agent, but to the diabolic originator of the temptation, that the Lord addressed the indignant rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me."

This temptation, as the Lord saw it, would be more accurately presented thus :—"Then the devil took Him, and set Him on Mount Calvary, and showed to Him a man suffering the death of the cross ; and the devil said to Him, All this Thou must suffer by following Thy present course ; but if Thou wilt desert that course, I will deliver Thee from the threatened consequences."

This might appear mystical through its sudden-

ness if we fix our thoughts on the mountain and the outward accessories of the picture, but not if we remember that any train of thoughts respecting suffering would naturally lead on to this, in the Redeemer's mind, and that it is the ultimate suggestion of words in which lies their power. One who should undertake to report the really effective suggestions of words—the pictures or thoughts which they ultimately excited, and which so dwelt in the imagination and aroused the desires as to eventuate in acts—though giving us the truest, would seem to sketch a most mystical picture of life. To assert that the account of our Lord's temptation is of this character is not therefore to make it less but more real—not less but more ordinary and life-like.

But again: as we recognise the reality of the tempter, and the deep import of the thoughts and images which he suggested, so must we also the reality of the temptation as affecting its subject.

The connexion between our Redeemer's Godhead and His humanity need in no wise interfere with the reality of the temptation. The great mystery of the Lord's whole human existence consisted in the voluntary suppression of the Divine will where

it might have overborne the human will. It was this original self-limitation which rendered it impossible for the Divine nature to interfere unduly at the great crises of the conflict. Man had been overcome, and in order to redemption man must conquer; otherwise there had been no healthy and perfect stock from out which the flower of a holy humanity might again unfold itself. Christ came that He might be that tree of life by union with which all the withered boughs of humanity might regain strength and vigour.

And for the accomplishment of this end, the Divine Nature voluntarily restricted itself in every thought and feeling, partaking thus in all the actions of the God-man. For at every point of our Lord's career, while His human will acted, His Divine will must have abstained from acting in interference. There might be distinctly, or even exclusively, Divine volitions, but these never interfered with the proper action of the human will. In every deed, therefore, of our Saviour's human life, there was the operation of His whole complex mysterious nature. While in the human will there was the act of performing, in the Divine will there was the act of refraining. And thus, without the

possibility of disharmony, were two perfect and entire natures, existent and operant in the one person, Christ Jesus. It is quite impossible for us to declare what were the precise relations of the two natures, or what the limits of their reciprocal action ; but so much as has been stated is plain, that the Divine Nature in Christ, while it was concerned in each act of His life, did not so interfere as to destroy the freedom and therefore reality of His human nature. The mystery here finds an analogy in what we are compelled to admit respecting ourselves. For in every act of our will there are two factors, the Infinite and the finite, since no act of a finite being can be performed but in the sphere and through the support of the Infinite. The difference in the two cases may be stated thus. We are related to God as distinct persons—Christ comprises in one person the human and Divine. We, as creatures, are sustained by the Creator—Christ, as Creator, sustained Himself. In our case, God does not interfere to take away our freedom—in Christ's case, beside this, He Himself does not, as God, interfere to take away the freedom of His own will as man. No doubt Christ's humanity involves the same relations, and pre-

sents the same mysteries, as ours, while, in addition to these, it embraces those peculiar relations which are a consequence of the Incarnation. But what we assert is, that the mysteries of the former relation, whose existence we must admit, will furnish an analogy to help us to conceive the nature of the latter.

As God, Christ could not be tempted ; but it will be evident, from what has been said, that this will not make the assertion impossible, that He could be tempted as man. As man He could reason, sorrow, hope, love, suffer ; and having faculties which could be thus affected, he was accessible to temptation. His human faculties were so many points of possible contact with sin ; at all those points sin could solicit Him and make Him feel the irritation of a request. This irritation must issue in some response on the part of Christ, which, before the trial, might conceivably be either the response of concurrence (which is sin), or that of repugnance and rejection (which is holiness). Satan tried in the desert to make it the response of concurrence ; our Lord uniformly returned that of rejection and abhorrence. So that now we can say in the words of the Epistle to the

Hebrews—"We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

In noticing next the character of the temptations, we may observe how admirably adapted these were to the probable weakness of their subject. There is no grossness in them—no revolting sensuality—nothing to shock the calm, holy nature of the Son of Man. Satan comes with the language of an anxious inquirer—"If Thou be the Son of God;" that is, "I really wish to know; and outwardly, at least, you seem so unlike the predicted King of Israel."

Suppose a subtle adversary should come, and ask any of us to show him whether we possessed some power which had been attributed to us, hinting, in his request, "You seem to fill a very obscure station; surely men must be sadly oblivious of your merit; or—I scarcely like to suggest that—but, can they be right? Are you the inferior person you seem? I don't mean that I think so, only give me satisfaction; display your power, and I hope you will find in me, at least, a generous appreciation. You are a poor minister—just write

me a stirring leader for the newspapers ; or, you are a poor merchant—produce for me a sparkling work of fiction. Give me the satisfaction of seeing that you are misunderstood !” How harmless these things would seem ; just like the suggestion to our Great Master—“ You are hungry ; now turn these stones into bread.” Surely nothing could be more allowable, nor even commendable, than an exertion of power which should satisfy at once an honest desire for information in another, and an unavoidable natural craving in Himself.

In reply, let us suppose that you possess the power to write ; would it not be necessary to ask yourself, before complying with a request to exert it in the manner suggested, “ For what end was this power given to me ? In what way do my circumstances require that it should be exerted—to convulse a political clique, or to arouse slumbering souls ?—to gratify a fastidious taste, or to wrestle strongly for the truth ? ” And must not our Saviour ask a similar question before proceeding to exert the miraculous power which, as man, was committed to Him for a specific end. For Christ was the subject of law as well as we. He came not “ to do His own will, but the will of Him that

sent Him." He could not bestow the seats of honour in His kingdom except to those for whom they were prepared. It was not given Him to reveal "the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." Law reigns everywhere. God's very self is subject to His own self-imposed law of love and righteousness. Nothing is arbitrary but folly and sin. Christ's power of working miracles was measured and limited by law ; every wonder was pre-ordained ; each had its object and its end ; and it is not too much to say, that among those ends the gratification of the worker's own wants found no place. Christ must thirst and suffer like His brethren, but He must not bring water out of the rock to quench His own thirst, nor come down from the cross to relieve His own sufferings, even though His enemies challenged Him to show thus that He was the Son of God.

And therefore He cannot in the desert work a miracle to relieve His own hunger—that were to ignore the purpose of the miracle, and to distrust His Father ; yea, it were to despise the teaching of that older day when the God and Father of Israel brought His son out of Egypt, that he might

fast forty years in the wilderness, and be suffered to thirst and hunger, that God might humble him and prove him ; and so chasten the soul through the wants of the body, that the wayward child might learn at length how “man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Thus the Saviour met, exposed, and overcame the first temptation. The second is different, and harder to unmask and resist, for the adversary now changes both the point and method of attack. He says, in effect, “Transport yourself to the temple, stand upon its loftiest pinnacle, see the vast crowds of worshippers below, and mark how their hearts burn and glow with the desire for their promised King. You know what they expect. They want a sign from heaven, and are convinced that Messiah will one day flash forth on them in glory. You have shown that you are scrupulous about the mode in which you exert your power, but surely in this matter the people’s wish is anticipated by the Scriptures themselves. To what but such an emergency could the Psalmist refer when he said, ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they

shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.' The people desire to be convinced; you love them, and long to convince them; you are their King; they ought to be shown this; and the only question that remains is as to the way in which they shall be shown. But that way must be most effective to them in which they are looking for evidence, and therefore must be the best, if it is a lawful one. Since, then, its lawfulness is testified, as I have shown, by Scripture, what hinders?—Cast Thyself down."

It has been said, as truly as quaintly, "The devil only once quotes Scripture, and then only to misquote it;" he omits the words, "in all thy ways," and for this plain reason, that the passage suppressed might very well suggest the question, "Is this one of my ways?" The people desire to have a great conqueror as their king. They wish for victories, and spoil, and outward dominion; to place their foot on the necks of their enemies, and to triumph in the subjugation of the world. Such a sign as they seek, they would accept as a token of these things. But I am not come to gratify such desires. My kingdom is to be one of peace and good-will, my victories are to be bloodless, or

to be purchased with no blood but my own. I may not try whether God will account this one of my ways. I can rely upon His promise while I am walking in His paths, but I cannot go out of His way to try if He will help me there, for again it is written, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

We may suppose that when the tempter had been foiled in his two former assaults, he would reason somewhat after this fashion: "This formidable antagonist cares nothing about the pleasures of sense, and as little about men's opinion, and there can therefore be only one vulnerable point. A man who can sacrifice anything, and fears no one, must be proud. He will love to govern, if not to persuade; to coerce, if not to conciliate."

Accordingly we are next told, that from a lofty mountain Satan showed our Redeemer all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. St. Luke adds, "in a moment of time," which (as I have already suggested in another connexion,) indicates rather the instantaneous grasp of a picture by the mind, than the deliberate observation of so vast a scene by the senses.

The fact seems very probably to have been

thus :—The tempter suggested, “ Imagine yourself on the summit of that lofty mountain. You see from thence the glory of the kingdoms of the civilized world. Here the Parthian, with his barbaric pomp and Oriental splendour, there the rich domains, fair cities, and teeming multitudes of queenly Rome. Look at them well, fill your heart with a sense of their glory, taste in fancy the conqueror’s stern joy who receives the homage and obedience of all. Behold in their midst one mighty towering throne, the centre of the world—a thousand subject kings, a thousand mighty peoples, prostrate at its everlasting base ; and high above them all, in sole and awful majesty, one matchless man, whose word is fate, whose nod is destiny ! Seest Thou ? ‘ All these will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.’ ”

Worship me ! Can we suppose that the wily tempter would put his alternative in this repulsive shape ? He had twice tried, and therefore partly knew the holy force of the will that had resisted him ; would he in his final effort stand forth the confessed Devil ? This is the substance of his proposal, no doubt, as it was detected by our Saviour and exposed for our warning, but its actual form

would be more likely thus :—Take this greatness by the right hand of Thy power. It is Thy right ; Thou art the heir of all things ; and, besides, the people expect Thee, and long for Thee ; they wish for a conqueror, and it will be for their good that Thou shouldst reign over them. Go, then, and mightily assume thine own. That is to say, Seize the kingdom by such means as my servants adopt. Don't waver about righteousness, but at once compel submission. Are you to be a mere popular puppet, reigning by sufferance and consent, when the sceptre is your own without consent ? Bend the nations to your will, force their proud heads under the yoke. Set up a kingdom of brute force, such a one as I love, I, who am a murderer from the beginning. Do this, gain a wicked end by wicked means, and so worship me.

The reply is decisive :—"I am not sent to terrify by power, but to allure by love and establish in righteousness, and I know that the way to this is through deep humiliation ; that my kingdom must be founded on abasement ; that the steps of its throne must be sprinkled by my own blood. The kingdom is mine, as you have said, but mine to

make it my Father's—mine, not to desolate but to bless. I have to conquer, but this is not through power but through love ; not by shedding the blood of hapless multitudes, but by pouring out my own. I have to be highly exalted ; not by trampling out life, and liberty, and hope, but through my own unparalleled suffering and degradation. I see it all ; and here for eternity I choose shame, agony, death, for the world's peace and God's glory ; the rod, the scourge, the cross, and the grave, to do the will of Him that sent me. Hence with thy black visions of hate and hell ! I will not worship thee ; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

We see brought out most strikingly in this last temptation, the great lesson which has been taught by all. The adversary had only one end, though he went by divers ways to compass it. He addressed different passions—self-love, love of applause, love of rule ; he suggested various pretexts—the satisfaction of Himself, and of the Jews, and the good of the world ; but he had only one end—to make our blessed Redeemer forget God's will in seeking His own. On the tempter's part it was a repetition of the scene in Paradise—a reiteration

tion of the suggestion, "Hath God said ye shall not eat? God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods"—a law and light to yourselves. Our Lord met it as Adam should have done, and failed to do, by disclaiming a separate purpose, and in each case answering, "Thus saith the Lord."

It is the same for us; we must renounce self that we may find ourselves in God. "He that will come after me," says the Redeemer, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." We must all be content to tread the same path our Saviour trod, even though the stones be sharp, and our feet tender; for if God lead us thither, that must be best.

And if any think such meek compliance slavish, and in the pride of that thought is determined to stand out for independence, let him remember that so he is murdering that better part of self which is after the image of God, and that even at this terrible price he cannot purchase independence. For if he refuse to do God's will, he shall do the devil's; if he will not be the willing son of God, he shall be the bond-slave of that slave of the pit who believes and trembles. We cannot get from

under the hand of God. His laws exist, they seize upon all creatures, good and bad, in their resistless grasp, and they will neither cease to exist, nor cease to operate, because we oppose them; they will produce a result conformable to our position towards them; happiness if we obey, wretchedness if we resist.

Never was emptier boast than that of Milton's Satan—

“Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.”

He served, despite himself, in hell! In heaven he had rendered the joyful service of love, in hell he grovelled under the compulsory slavery of fear and torment. The alternative is not that between obedience and freedom, for we must submit in any case; it is between the obedience of willing love on the one hand, and the servitude of reluctant hate on the other. We must be either free within the doom of love, or bound beneath the ban of judgment.

It was to show us this great truth, and to teach and enable us to refuse the evil, and choose the good, that our Saviour was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He fought this great battle, that He might give

us power to win it; that our craving for victory over sin might be satisfied; that evil, whether resident in us, or personated in the evil one, might be destroyed for ever; that our soul, dimmed and defiled by sin, might become, through the sanctifying power of Christ's spirit, a pure and beautiful temple of God!

There may be some listening to me, who, though strongly struggling against evil, have lost the freshness of this early faith, and with it, all its strength and comfort. "I tremble," says one, "when I see those first affections, even those shadowy recollections which once dwelt in them, and coloured their life, passing away; their life's star fading into the light of common day." The picture recalls Wallenstein, at the crisis of his fate, looking from out the dimness and distraction of his earthly fortunes for the still shining of his life's star—

"Methinks, if I but saw him 'twould be well with me,
He was the star of my nativity."

There is one star, my brethren, which will never fade, which no clouds of doubt or sorrow may quench, which will always shine pure and high in our life's heaven,—“the bright and the morning star.”

Oh ! let us leave our dry systems, and formal notions, and kneel humbly with the shepherds by the manger-cradle of Bethlehem. Let us follow the holy Babe that lies there through all His life of Divine humility, through the desert to the cross, through the grave to the right hand of the Father ; and stedfastly clinging to His side, who once suffered, and now reigns, let us be determined to know nothing, neither self, nor heroes, nor systems ; nothing but the Light, from whom all illumination comes ; the Truth, in whom the Eternal shines through the temporal ; the Life, in whom alone, through the communion of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, our souls can rejoice and live !

SERMON III.

ROMANS I. 16, 17.

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek : for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

I FEEL, my brethren, that this is not the time (even if the limits of a single sermon afforded space,) for an exact and rigorous investigation of the nature of the atonement. But though thus precluded, by conditions of time and space, from that wider consideration of this subject, on which I could have desired to enter ; I trust that while contemplating the general aspect of the truth, we shall not fail, through the help of the spirit of Christ, to catch something of its spirit and power.

St. Paul declares in the text that he would not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, even in the

metropolis of the world ; for whatever might be the might and greatness of the world's mistress, the gospel was the power of God ; and not a power merely to reign or coerce—but of which the end was to be unto salvation—unto the saving and healing of men.

In order to the accomplishment of this salvation, the gospel satisfies one condition and demands another. The objective condition of the gospel's power is the revelation therein of "the righteousness of God ;" which, being found, is again adapted to call forth the subjective condition—that this revelation shall be received and apprehended by "faith." The revelation is capable of saving, yea, is adapted to save ; but since it is to save moral agents, morally, it must be from faith, as the subjective ground of departure, and unto faith, as the subjective condition of progression ; though it is the power of God unto salvation, it is only so to "them that believe."

We must not forget, however, that it is to "all them that believe," whether Jews or Gentiles ; that is, that the gospel is addressed to all, and adapted to affect all ; and that, therefore, its salvation is accessible to all.

As the word salvation involves the ideas of "safety" and "healing," it points to the "sickness" and "danger" which gave occasion for it; and again, since the objective means of salvation is the revelation of a righteousness for man, but proceeding from and acceptable to God, it is evident that sin is the sickness and danger from which there is to be deliverance—sin, in its twofold aspect of a disease and a condemnation, as constituting the disease, and creating the danger.

Let us first, then, consider the nature of sin, which creates the need for salvation.

The first chapter of Genesis teaches us what God made man, the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, how man defaced God's work, and what he has made himself. The great problem of humanity is, how to undo man's work, and to restore God's.

The true nature and wide scope of this problem are very rarely discerned, and hence the insufficiency of the great multitude of proposed solutions. When, for example, we hear the zealots for temperance broadly asserting that total abstinence from intoxicating drinks will remove all human ills, we know that the mistake has arisen from

a partial view of the end to be accomplished. Total abstinence may be a remedy for drunkenness, it may be a specific for that particular form of spiritual disease; and when it is urged on that account, and declared to be effective to that end, many would make no objection. But to assert that it can cure all the evils of the human soul, is to imitate the empiric, who, because he can prove that he has discovered a specific for the tooth-ache, asserts at once that his remedy will remove that deep-seated organic disease, of which the tooth-ache may be only one symptom.

Let it be asserted that total abstinence, secular education, political reform, social amelioration, and the like, are useful for their own special ends, and we shall cheerfully admit it. They tend to counteract special forms of disease, they alleviate pain, ward off danger, and facilitate cure, but of themselves they cannot expel the spiritual disease, they do not reach down to its root, they cannot begin at its heart.

But here it may well be asked, "Can anything do so? Is there a remedy so potent that it can strike down to the deep core of the disorder, and, beginning there, can expel the disease from within,

outward, till it has restored health to the extremest member of the frame?"

If you remember that the salvation spoken of in the text is a salvation from sin, I think you will discern in the Apostle's emphatic assertion that the gospel is the "power of God" unto such salvation, an indication that we have here the remedy described. Let us, however, examine this matter a little more particularly.

In general, in order to test the sufficiency of a proposed remedy, we must know three things: first, the nature of the disease to be cured; secondly, the nature of the remedy; and thirdly, the possibility of procuring this latter. With a view, then, to testing the efficacy of the gospel remedy, let us inquire first, as we have already proposed to do, the nature of the spiritual disease.

That which in this connexion we shall be desirous to ascertain, will not be so much the outward symptoms as their inward cause. To illustrate at once the importance of this distinction, and its special application in the case of sin, let us take as an instance one of those pulmonary diseases, which produce death by the interception of free communication between the air and the blood.

In reference to its general symptoms, such a disease would be properly described as a wasting or consumption of the whole frame ; but in reference to its cause, as the decay of a special organ, if we were thinking of the immediate cause, or if we had in view rather the ultimate occasion of disease, as the interception of free communion between the air and blood.

And so phenomenally, sin is properly characterized as unlikeness to God, or loss of His image, manifesting itself in such symptoms as those displayed in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Considered, however, in respect to its occasion, sin is the rebellion of the human will, or, if we have reference rather to the ultimate than the immediate cause, the intermission of free and loving communion with God. Now, in order to test the value of a remedy for the bodily disease, we have only to inquire if it will remove the immediate cause of the mischief; if, that is, it will arrest the decay of the organ, since we know, first, that the air is always ready to do its work, if there be no organic obstacle; and secondly, that the diseased organ can offer no strictly spontaneous opposition.

In considering, however, the requisites of spiritual healing, the conditions are not so simple ; for in the first place it is by no means evident that a justly offended God will be ready to allow the resumption of free communion at the creature's desire ; and secondly, even if this condition were fulfilled, there is a power of spontaneous resistance in the diseased will, that might reject the offer of communion, even if it were made.

It would appear, then, to be necessary to show in this latter case, that the remedy for sin disclosed in the gospel is adapted, first, to restore that free and loving communion between man and God, the loss of which is the ultimate cause of sin ; and secondly, to subdue that spontaneous opposition of the rebellious will, which is its proximate cause. I repeat, it would appear to be necessary to show, first, that the gospel furnishes means for restoring objectively the intermitted communion between God and man ; and secondly, that it effectually disposes the human will to give up its wicked and unreasonable opposition to the restoration of such communion. I say effectually disposes, not compels, for it is no part of my design to show that in every case the gospel

remedy does actually effect a cure, but only that it is adapted to do so ; and that if in any case it fails of its effect, the failure is due to the patient, and not to the remedy ; that in such case the diseased will can have no right to complain that the mere existence of natural opposition rendered disobedience inevitable, for there is that in the gospel cure which is fitted to subdue such natural opposition, and which, in every case, when it was applied, would subdue it, but for additional, and conscious, and most culpable resistance. .

After this explanation, it may be added that the two apparently distinct lines of investigation practically coalesce.

And this is no more than we should anticipate on the ground of the Divine economy. In any scheme of salvation of which God was the author, we should expect that the provisions which actually removed the obstacles to communion on God's part, would be also best fitted to remove them on the part of man ; that the means which made God's reconciliation to us an objective fact, would make our reconciliation to Him a subjective possibility ; so that when an apostle could declare "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto

Himself," he would be sure that the appended exhortation must carry almost resistless power: "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

And thus the questions suggested by an examination of the nature of the disease are reduced to this one—"Is the gospel remedy fitted to restore the intermitted communion between God and man?' If it be, it is a remedy for all the sins of all men in all ages; for then it will remove at once their proximate and ultimate cause.

Surely a more momentous inquiry was never proposed for human consideration! What would the consumptive patient say, if any should assure him that a remedy had been discovered which would remove the cause of his disease, and restore him at once to health and vigour? Can we not see the feverish hope which flushes his hectic cheek, and sparkles in his eager eyes as they burn to penetrate the secret? And what then should be the thrill of joy when I tell you of a greater deliverance—of the cure of that disease which is wasting the very centre of your life, which is destroying your immortal soul, and

casting the dark shadow of a terrible nameless death over the whole eternity to come?

And, my brethren, I no more doubt that I can tell you of such a remedy than that I now live and speak to you, for hope in this case becomes faith. His spirit is present with us here, who once breathed the promise, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." I am about to lift Him up in your midst, as once Moses did the brazen serpent to the snake-bitten Israelites. And I know that the spirit of our blessed Lord is here, to melt the hard heart, to draw after Him the reluctant will, and to turn the glazing eye of the sin-smitten victim to the uplifted Lamb of God. Oh, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth!"

As I have shown, the proof of this, to the intellect and the heart, will depend on our answer to the question, "Is the gospel remedy fitted to restore the intermitted communion between God and man?" Is it likely that this end will be accomplished by the revelation of that "righteousness of God," of which the nature and development are disclosed in the gospel?

I have nothing to do now with schemes which we might invent for this purpose. God has shown us his scheme—does this commend itself to us as adapted to heal our deadly wound? will it restore the lost communion?

First, in the history of the development of the righteousness in question, the gospel meets this inquiry by the direct and tremendous assertion that God has become man, and thus that the communion of the two natures is actually restored in one person. Our minds are too narrow to grasp at once the full import of this astounding declaration; the words that convey it have grown so familiar that we have almost ceased to think what they mean.

Let us then try to realize somewhat more vividly the statement of St. John, that the Word who created all things was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Let us take a wide survey of creation. Beginning at the physical media which vibrate in such millionfold connexion and diversity, let us ascend in thought through all the combinations of inferior forces, to that exquisitely tempered organ which responds to their nicest vibrations; from

the meanest insect in the water drop, through all the myriad tribes of vital existence, to the highest forms which adorn and dignify the earth. And then, leaving the present, let us advance against the stream of time, through untold ages, to the days when our old earth was young. And beginning thence, at the lowest land which was first deposited beneath the wild warm waves of Cambrian or Silurian seas, where no vital form has left its impress, let us ascend the long stream of time, past so many vital dynasties, so many extinct systems of strange or gigantic life, to this crowning kingdom of man.

And when we have reviewed the wonders of our little home, in its past and present, then climb the heavens, journey on past sun and system on wings of light, or, since light is a laggard on this journey, and its flame-pinions strike the æther all too feebly, soar on wings of thought from universe to universe, for ever, and ever, and ever, till thought itself tires, faint and breathless with the greatness of its way, till even thought cannot think the endlessness of sphere on sphere.

Then try to recal and collect the number and wonder of those "realized thoughts" of God; yea,

to think of the infinite perfections of which these are the signs; yea, to glance at the ineffable Being in whom these perfections centre, and find their ground; at the Maker, and Doer, and Upholder of all this.

Oh! if you have got the vast impression, if the infinite weight of it crushes you down to deepest humility, now, I ask you, what would be thought of his presumption who should dare to suggest that this great glorious God could take the form of an insect of clay, on one of the meanest of those countless worlds?

What are all miracles to this? what are rebukings of fever or death to this? that God, the Infinite, bowed Himself to the limits of a worm of dust! It was a miracle that shook the moral universe to its centre; the rising of a huge mountainous wave in the great ocean of spiritual law, which shall roll on for ever, breaking on no shore. Surely this is enough to bridge the infinite gulf between God and man, for this is no mere propinquity, no mere favourable juxtaposition, but a real union, a vital bond between the two natures, between offended God and offending man!

But I think I can anticipate an objection here.

It is evident that by this great act communion is restored between God and *a* man, between God and one personal partaker of human *nature*; but are we sure that we are therefore justified in saying that communion is restored between the human nature and the Divine? Was this wonderful Person enabled in some mysterious manner to embrace within His personality our whole nature, so as to be spiritually the germ of a new creation, even as Adam was naturally of the old? and if so, was this germ-nature really one with ours, so that it could feel and take the burden of our sinfulness, and bear it away; yea, so one, that we can enter into communion with it, even as it entered into communion with us, and stand in that new nature pure and reconciled before God? In short, did Christ truly and widely take our nature, or was He merely a human person, the perfect antithesis of sinful humanity, and therefore rather our reproach than our salvation?

I might remind you, in reply, of the impossibility of conceiving that the Infinite came into bounds for the sole purpose of establishing communion between Himself and one human person. I might again remind you of the ineffable way in which

Christ took our nature, or of the reiterated assertion of St. Paul, that Christ is the second Adam, the federal head of the new creation, as the first Adam was of the old ; but I rather turn, because it is an argument addressed more to the heart than to the head, and therefore one fitter for the present solemn season, to the account of our Saviour's spotless life and atoning death.

And that we may estimate this aright, let us remember what is the new relation to sin which our Redeemer's incarnation made possible to Him. As the result of an investigation of this subject in my last discourse, I felt justified in stating it thus : "His human faculties were so many points of possible contact with sin ; at all these points sin could solicit Him, and make Him feel the irritation of a request. This irritation must issue in some response on the part of Christ, which, before the trial, might conceivably be either the response of concurrence (which is sin), or that of repugnance and rejection (which is holiness)." Satan tried to make it the response of concurrence, by solicitation at the temptation, by oppression at the cross, which latter was more especially "the hour of power and darkness." We saw how

he failed at the former crisis of the struggle ; let us now glance at the historical development of the latter. The blandishments of solicitation having been resisted, Satan seems now to have attempted to bring the communion with a sinful nature so vividly before the Redeemer's consciousness, that connexion with sinners might seem to be identification with their sin. Who can tell the horrible vividness with which Jesus realized the sins of his human brethren at Gethsemane ? Who can imagine the unutterable loathing with which his spotless soul must have shrunk from being chained by the link of a common nature to the hideous corpse beside him ? The dead galley-slave chained to his fellow, chained through all the mortal changes, suggests a faint image of the horror of that pure soul of Christ, at the cleaving contact of the spiritual corpse, to which His own love and His Father's love had bound Him. See Him in the hour of the power of darkness shuddering through every spiritual fibre, under the enforced sense of a loathed contact with sin, under the sustained torment of an agony of pity for its victims. The cup of bitterness is held to His lips so long, that at length they murmur, pale and

quivering with pain—"Oh! my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me."

Even more terrible was the trial on the cross. Think of the pure love of Christ for his own; with what tenacious tenderness it pursued them to the grave, and beyond the grave; and how, like the love of God, it must have longed to be loved again, to reproduce itself in the objects of its affection! Think of His gentle soul with its wistful tenderness staggering beneath the storm of bitterest hatred and scorn, and of the anguish which, like an everlasting moan, breathes in that prayer of undying pity, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

But there was even yet a deeper deep of suffering. In the Lord's deadly weakness, when his senses were reeling, and his paralysed nerves had scarcely power to vibrate longer to the torment, He seems to have been made to realise the nearest possible approach to being—what He had refused to be, what in Gethsemane He had seen His brethren to be—evil and alienated from God! It is not merely sorrow now, nor the anguish of keen sympathy with sinners, but worse—sense of utter, blank isolation! Evil seems to have enshrouded

Him with such a pall of blackness, that no ray of Divine light can penetrate ; it seems to have come so near His soul as to clamour that it is one with Him, that at length it has found a home in the pure heart, and that His Father is gone ; for the cry is no longer, “ Father, if it be possible,” but “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” —I had no human help in the garden, but Thou wert present. I could call to Thee “ my Father,” and pray, Thy will be done—O, why hast Thou deserted me, why art Thou so far away, so that I have to cry as from a distance, not to my Father, but my God !

And this is He who had said in the prospect of cruellest desertion, “ Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”

O my brethren, ask your heart, is He merely a human person standing in His own integrity, suffering only as a martyr for God ; or does this superhuman anguish betoken a Saviour, staggering so under the fearful burden, because “ He bears our sins in His own body on the tree ? ” —because His holiness sees the heinousness of our sins—because His love feels infinite pity for the sinners—and because both discern and approve the terrors

of that Divine Wrath, which condemns alike sin and the sinful? If it be thus, if no otherwise, we are able to explain the awful facts of the agony and passion, then must we conclude that Christ was our substitute who truly bore our sins; that He is our propitiation who offered satisfaction to the Father in our stead, a satisfaction not arising from the contemplation of the Son's suffering as such, but rather as the form of a perfect response to the Father's view of sin, a form which that response necessarily took when it was given by a perfectly holy and loving Being, in a nature capable of suffering. And thus we may see that in Christ the Father is satisfied with humanity, that in Him our nature is grateful to God; or, in other words, that the gospel remedy is as wide and as deep as the disease; that the righteousness which God has provided in Christ, God may accept for us all, and that thus with all humanity the intermitted communion may justly be restored.

The only question which remains is that which relates to the subjective condition of salvation—how may each obtain this remedy, and enter into this communion? We answer in the words of

the text, it is "to every one that believeth" the righteousness of God, "to all and upon all them that believe." Faith realises the Father's satisfaction in the Son, it realises the Son's satisfaction as for us ; nay, more, it takes hold on the Son as the centre and source of life, for "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith," and "our life is hid with Christ in God." This actual junction of natures is most vividly illustrated in Romans v. : "For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous." We took Adam's sinful nature, and therefore its qualities (not its acts, but its qualities,) are ours. And God, who judges according to the spiritual state of a creature, not merely after outward appearances, but according to inward dispositions, must therefore account us sinners ; for sinful dispositions include all sinful acts potentially, and will actually develop such acts, if not counteracted and eradicated. It is, therefore, correct to say—not in the sense of a fictitious transference of acts, but in the truer sense of a real union of natures, and consequent participation of qualities,—that all sin in Adam, that God sees us all sinful in him.

And so, on the other hand, by union with Christ—a real spiritual union, constituted by the spiritual act of faith—we take His nature, and partake of His qualities. There is here no fictitious transfer of meritorious acts ; but a real participation in the qualities of that new nature which is the centre of the new creation, and in which is found a righteousness for all men. So Christ is truly the Lord our Righteousness, God sees us righteous in Him, for we are sharers in that Nature which is perfectly righteous, and which shall actually develope in us righteous acts, in proportion as we enter more deeply into its life. And thus, there is an imputation, which has its ground in reality, both of sin and righteousness. To incline either to the side of mere external imputation on the one hand, or of independent imitation on the other, will enable us, indeed, to construct a much more intelligible system, and to satisfy more completely the merely logical faculty ; but it will neither content the heart, which is awakened to a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, nor adequately represent the statements of Scripture. These teach us that we do not live our life merely after the example of Christ, but in Christ as its

element, and through Christ as its perpetual supply. Our relation to Him is not merely that of separate saplings to a tree, which they resemble in growth, though fed from independent roots; but that of the branches of a tree, growing only while they abide in the tree, and derive sap therefrom. The branch, with its slender twigs and delicate leaves, may be a copy of that larger whole, of which it is a part, just as we may be, and should be, of Christ, but in both cases the imitation depends on the union, the form on the life of which it is a development.

We are most exactly like the wild vine shoot, pervaded by the sour sap of the natural stock—worthless and fruitless. We must be grafted into the true Vine, and then, as we take hold on the good stock, vesicle by vesicle, and filament by filament, gradually the healthy sap of the fruitful Vine will pervade our barren cells, and fill them with health and fertility. The act which, in the spiritual grafting, corresponds to the first prehension of the wild vine's natural filaments, is faith—faith which, feeling forth for the better life, first grasps the nature of Christ, and clings more and more closely for ever.

And thus we have tried to show that the gospel is all that we sought, not only a remedy adapted to restore loving communion between God and man, but one which is accessible to all, which each may take and appropriate through faith, and "which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

If any should think himself unworthy to take God's gift, because he is too insignificant or too evil, then I would ask you to remember that it is the righteousness of God which you are to take; a righteousness which God's love provided for you before you were fit. For the atonement is simply the form in which God's love expressed itself, not the cause of that love, but love the cause of it. "God so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

O, my brethren, measure the depth of this love as you do that of human affection, by the sacrifice to which it will submit for its objects! And don't let your hearts be closed to the greatness of this thought by the shallow sneer about anthropomorphism. This is the curse of educated men. They are afraid of each other,

they daren't tell out the deepest conviction of their hearts lest some one should sneer! O, let us pray to God to pour into our souls such richness and fulness of His love that we can look sarcasm steadily in the eye, and love it down! There is no other way for us. Surely, my brethren, the heartless God of a heartless understanding has been shown among us to be as repugnant to philosophy as it is blighting to religion. Let us, then, flee from the chill atmosphere of this bad scornful dream, and, standing in the warm light of heaven, open our hearts to the deep fulness of our Father's love.

He so loved us, that He gave His only-begotten, His well-beloved, who had lain in His bosom from eternity, and gave Him to be buffeted, spitted on, and crucified. He looked on while men cruelly tortured and murdered, Him whom He had loved for ever, and yet His lightning slept, for He loved the murderers! That is what God's love could do, that is what it could sacrifice, for rebels and ingrates! O, my brethren, is it wonderful, when men will let the atonement speak to them—when they will open their souls to it—that it should make all new to them, in

heaven and earth? and that in the overwhelming might of the love which it reveals, it should break down all our self-erected barriers of pride and coldness, and mingle all together, kings and beggars, scholars and clowns, in the vital fellowship of the body of Christ? Who can restrict the salvation of God, when His heart is aflame with the fire of its love? It must be universal, then, for, as a poor man once said, "I feel that when I have most of the spirit of Christ in me, I have most love to all men. And I cannot believe that the spirit of Christ would move me to love all men, if He did not love all men Himself." Let a man once drink into the spirit of Christ, by dwelling in prayerful thought on the wonderful facts of His redemptive work, and he could no more limit the love of God than he could think of taxing the air, or the free waves that girdle the world. He could not limit it, and as little could he doubt it. At such times he could cry with all his heart, like old Father Luther, "As the young eagles" cower beneath the great wing that covers them, so "I dwell without fear beneath that most ample and large heaven of the forgiveness of sins which is spread

over me." "That most ample and large heaven" embracing me, he would say, on every side, folding me gently in its life-giving embrace as the caressing ambient air does, and deep, exhaustlessly deep, as the fathomless abyss of heaven's own blue !

Do you doubt it ? Then glance for an instant at that terrible scene on Calvary. There, hanging by the Redeemer's side, was an outcast, as far from love as any of us can have gone, expiating a felon's crimes by a felon's death. And in the depth of his degradation he lifted the tearful eye of penitence to the face of the Saviour ; he prayed, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom ;" and faint as was the utterance, humble as was the prayer, our Blessed Jesus heard it in the midst of His agony, and crushed and bruised in soul and body as He was, hastened to bind up the broken heart beside Him. He was asked for remembrance, He gave a kingdom, and made the cross of the thief the gate of Paradise.

There is no soul which He does not love, none with which He cannot sympathize, for He is neither ancient nor modern, occidental nor oriental, Jew nor Gentile, noble nor peasant,

learned nor ignorant, but simply man, the only individual who was also universal !

And therefore His words reach all hearts, therefore they melt the stony Indian of the woods, and warm the Esquimaux, and tame the robber, casting fire into every region of the sin-chilled earth, filling the dungeon with light, and the slave-swamp with songs of rejoicing, and prophesying thus to every race and time, "Behold, I make all things new."

O ! is it not a glorious future ? is it not a promise to nerve the most trembling soul ? a weight of love, and wealth of grace, to force the dumbest lips to praise ?

Pray we, then, that the cross of Christ may be raised on every hill, and borne through every valley, and hidden in every heart, till in the fulness of its power, it have subdued us all, till even rebellious pride has learnt to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation."

SERMON IV.

1 COR. XV. 35.

*“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up ?
and with what body do they come ?”*

IN approaching this mysterious and deeply interesting subject, in which the temptations to speculate are so great, and so almost irresistible, it will behove us to bear in mind that we are not inquiring what may be the possible or conceivable future of our body, but simply what will be its future as represented in the Scriptures of truth.

And first, it is clear that St. Paul is here treating distinctively of the resurrection of the “body.” The objector’s question is, “With what body do they come?” and the apostle replies to it directly, both from the analogy of nature, and the characteristic facts of Christianity. “If,” he says, “there is a natural, there is also a spiritual body.” If there is now a body fitted to the impulses and appetites of the animal life, there shall be also a body

specially adapted to the exigencies of the spiritual life. There are some morbid spiritualists among us, who are almost ready with Plotinus to blush because they have a body ; to such the Christian doctrine of the resurrection is nothing more than a rude and gross relic of a barbarous age. For those, who to any extent participate in this feeling, it may not be without its use, before proceeding to the more immediate subject of this discourse, to suggest that finite mind, without corporeal development, is to us inconceivable. For how can we conceive of mere mind ? It is a substance—the basis of mental phenomena—and it is finite by supposition. Does it occupy space ? and if not, what or where is it ? But if it does, then it has extension and is bounded in some way. These boundaries must give it some form, some (at least) mental visibility. How, then, do we conceive of this simple essential spirit ? Most people who make the fruitless attempt imagine it a sort of shapeless film. Here, of course, “shapeless” does not mean “formless,” but only an irregular or unusual form ; for what is bounded has some kind of form determined by its boundaries. Here, then, is a something with form and extension ; that is, with

some of the essential properties of matter. The truth is, that we cannot represent to ourselves pure finite mind, that is, a spiritual substance existing apart from body, and only manifesting its being, even to thought, by non-material phenomena.* This difficulty does not of course occur when we are thinking of the Infinite Mind, for God is to be apprehended as incommensurable by any of the limitations of space, and therefore as being, in this respect, incomprehensible to us. Again, to the objection that we read in the Scriptures of a state intermediate between death and the resurrection, in which the spirit cannot be united either to its present or future bodily tabernacle, the reply is easy. Scripture nowhere tells us that incorporeity is a condition of that state; and the analogy of nature, so far as it is applicable, leads to the opposite supposition; for in an inferior, but to some extent similar metamorphosis, the chrysalis has a body which is no more that of its former than of its later development.

Let it be remembered, then, that the difficulties

* If there be such a thing as a finite existence, purely intelligible, viz., which manifests its being only in intelligible modes, the independence of such existence is to us inconceivable.

attendant on the supposition of incorporeal finite spirit are not suggested by the Bible, but by the foolish theories of those who vainly imagine that by ignoring the Scriptural notices of a bodily resurrection, they can drop this subject from their thoughts. Let it be distinctly understood, that any future existence of the soul rationally involves a future of the body ; that the Christian Scriptures nowhere speak of that intangible, and to us inconceivable thing, an incorporeal finite spirit ; and that specially, when St. Paul argues, in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, about the resurrection, his reference is to the resurrection of the body.

To gain a clear conception of the nature of our subject, it will next be necessary to guard you against an ambiguity in the phrase "bodily identity."

The American Professor Hitchcock saw this ambiguity, and proposed a solution of the attendant difficulty which he thought original. I need not remind you that he was mistaken ; and that Bishop Butler not only foresaw the difficulty, but also suggested its solution, in his Treatise of Personal Identity.

When we speak of the "sameness" of inorganic substances, we use the word "same" in its strict philosophical meaning. When we say, for instance, "This is the same stone," we mean, "it contains the same material particles;" but if, on the other hand, reference be made to a body which is organic, the word "same" with respect to it must have a looser meaning. Thus, when we say, "This is the same tree or horse," we do not necessarily mean that it contains the same particles of matter, since in a living body these are continually changing. Neither do we mean that it has the same form, since the mutations of shape are as constant. How different the forms of the new-born infant, the growing boy, and the tottering imbecile, and yet we say it is the same body which has passed through all these phases. So far is sameness of form from constituting identity, that two different men of the same age might be much more alike in form, than the same man is like to his former self in childhood.

If, then, neither sameness of form nor of particle determines the sameness of an organic body, what does constitute bodily identity in this case? We shall perhaps best at once answer this question,

and illustrate its connexion with our subject, by following the train of the apostle's thought, even though this may occasionally require partial repetition of our general statement of the question. He illustrates the resurrection of the body by the burial and germination of the seed sown. This case indicates, first, that an apparent decay and death does not affect the continuance of the same life. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." And, secondly, it suggests, as we have already shown, that the continuance of the same life is not affected either by an apparent change of form, or real change of particle. "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but naked grain, whether wheat or other, and God giveth it a body (of such form and beauty) as it pleaseth Him, and to each seed its own body."

Before the continual change of particles in all organic bodies was made matter of distinct observation, the germination of seed-wheat afforded one of the most pertinent examples which could have been selected, of the continuation of the same life by means of particles of matter not originally existing in the parent of that life; for it might have been perceived even then, that after a very

short time, all the future increase of the plant was derived from extraneous sources. And yet, as plainly, the plant was no more than a development of the life that was in the seed. But for this life there had been no plant ; according as the life was vigorous or otherwise in the parent, so was it in the offspring ; while it was equally evident that the character of life in the former determined that in the latter—the life in the seed moulding all the successive appropriations of foreign matter by the plant, according to its own inherent type.

Thus the case of the seed-grain showed conclusively, and might suggest, even in the apostle's days, that there could be continuation of the same life, without retention of the same particles of matter.

It will be noticed that I have not said that this instance proves the identity of body despite a change of particles ; because I suspect that, as we are accustomed to look on such an instance as this, we should scarcely admit that it proved as much.

When we think of the burying of the seed, and its resurrection, our minds are irresistibly carried on to what we deem the ultimate product of this process, viz., the grains of wheat which survive the

plant's decay. And looking at the grains in the ear as the representatives of the seed sown, we say that they are not the same body with it ; they may be a continuation of its life, but they are not identical with its body ; and hence (apart from Scriptural representations), it would be an accurate statement of the result to say that this instance proved to us, rather, that continuation of life, than that identity of body, was independent of sameness of particles.

Our ordinary conception of bodily identity would not only lead us to require, in order to its satisfaction, that there should be an uninterrupted connexion between the material particles which successively constitute the same body, but further, that this connexion be preserved without a fundamental change in the form of corporeal development. I say "a fundamental change," because very extensive superficial changes are compatible with our general conception of identity. Thus a tree may be very different in external appearance during the successive changes of its life ; yet since, through all these, the general arboreal form is preserved, we unhesitatingly pronounce it the same tree to the end. But we should not in like manner

be prepared to call the acorn the same body either as its parent or its offspring ; for here, though there is a continuation of the same life, the general form is changed from the arboreal to the seminal.

This seems to be our general mode of judging about bodily identity ; and it is common to suppose that St. Paul judged on this matter as we do, and to interpret his illustrations accordingly. But where do we find, in the chapter we are examining, that the apostle ever raises the general question of bodily identity ? He explains his own ideas on the matter ; and surely these explanations should determine the sense of his words. It is true that a correct conception of bodily identity in general, will enable us to answer satisfactorily the objections which are commonly alleged against the doctrine of the resurrection. But it is not merely our object to answer objections. We wish to ascertain positively what idea St. Paul attached to bodily identity, what he thought entitled him to say that the body which had been buried should be raised again ; in other words, what connexion he discerned between the two bodies which he thought warranted him in calling them the same ? For if some persons should object that such a connexion,

as St. Paul describes, is not sufficiently close or extensive to justify its designation by the word "identity," we answer that this is a matter of no practical consequence to us ; we are not anxious to show that St. Paul used words to represent the same conceptions which they now suggest, we simply want to know what he meant by them. If we can discover this, we gain possession of the fact which he taught ; and if in the present instance we mean something more by identity than St. Paul meant, then we have only to remember that in this case, as in so many others, the word "identity," or words equivalent to it (since the word itself is not used), will have in St. Paul an accommodated or Christian sense—a sense which we might have expected to be peculiar, since ordinary forms of speech are here applied to describe an altogether unique thing. In the same manner, justification before God, regeneration, and sanctification, were new objects of thought, and involved new spiritual experiences ; and how could the old names possibly represent them except by an accommodation of meaning ? In all these cases, the only important inquiry is, how far was the meaning accommodated ? what new element of thought must we introduce

or omit to gain the writer's true meaning, and see things from his point of view?

Now, I think it is quite apparent in the subject before us, that the apostle's idea of bodily identity was wider than that which we generally entertain. In the case of the seed-grain, which he introduces for the express purpose of illustrating his meaning, the opposition is only between the naked grain sown, and the plant which sprang from it. He does not pass over in thought, as we do, from the plant to its product, and compare the germ-seed with the similar grains of corn which have sprung from it. He advances in his comparison no further than the growing plant, and he does so because this best conveys his meaning. In the natural world there is always imperfection. Each thing strives to attain its highest development; and just when it has attained it, decays and dies. Paul, then, does not pursue the plant into its decay, because he wishes to illustrate the case of a resurrection, where "what is sown in weakness shall be raised in power; what is sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption; what was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory." He uses the natural image only so far as it is useful to this end, and

his comparison, therefore, is between the decaying unsightly seed, and the vigorous living plant, decked with strength and beauty, which springs from it; and he asserts that this latter is but a development of the former, but an outcome of the organizing life of the former; yea, but another form of the same thing. St. Paul felt himself at liberty to say that in the plant the seed had risen again; that it, the seed, was quickened, and lived again in its immediate product: that is to say, to put the assertion into abstract terms, he felt that a continuation of the same life enabled him to describe the successive bodies in which it was continued as the same. That was the thing he meant when he said that the human body would rise again; he meant that the life of the spiritual body would be a development of the life of the natural body.

We are not to look for uniformity and exactness in the use of the term "body." St. Paul sometimes seems to speak of two different bodies, as when he says, "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." But that he is here describing only the formal differences of the two bodies, while he regards them as essentially the same, is

made manifest by his continual and almost unconscious references to their present and future as different states of the same thing. Thus: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it (the same body) is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Here, too, it may be well to remind you that it is easy to overlook the importance of the invaluable illustration we have been considering, by confounding it with others amongst which it occurs, and which have for their object not so much to exhibit the nature and meaning of the bodily resurrection, as to magnify the power by which it will be effected.

The endless variety of the animate creation in the present (and as we might add in the past), may well suggest the thought, cannot the God who pours their life through all these varying forms add a yet higher development, a yet nobler constructive power to the life which once glowed in the human breast?

But if we wish to gain and keep a definite grasp of what St. Paul meant by the resurrection of the body, we must take our impression from the illus-

tration which has been examined. This most clearly shows us that the apostle would call two successive bodily developments the same body, if they were successively moulded and animated by the same living force, if their types had always been resident in one vital principle. And thus, if there be a continuity of the life, we must (according to Scripture usage) call successive incorporations, merely modifications of the same body, whether the types to which they successively conform, or the particles of which they consist, be rigidly the same or not.

And surely this view is in itself the deepest and most philosophic! For why is a collection of particles moulded into a certain form? why does the evolving acorn, for instance, appropriate matter in a particular way—in that way which will mould it into an oak tree—and no other? Is it because of the wind, rain, sunshine, and chemical constituents which are supplied from without? All these put together could not make that into an oak, which contains in itself the innate type of an ash. No! the tree becomes an oak, the matter is accumulated in a certain way, because of the character of the vital power, which has by the

Creator's hand been implanted in that seed ; and what that identical vital force organizes—even though, like that of the caterpillar, it have the implicit power of organizing foreign matter according to differing successive types—what that same force organizes is in the innermost and truest sense one organic body ; the organizing force is the same, the central determining power is the same, even though the extraneous, and ever-changing appropriated matter may be massed and disposed in differing forms.

My words may seem, I know, to involve the assumption that vital force is something different in kind from the matter which it organizes. They do not, however, necessarily imply this, and such an assumption is by no means necessary to the truth of the conclusion, even in a philosophic point of view. For if it be urged, with the positivist, that life is not a distinct entity, but merely a function of the tissue, an expression for the result of a peculiar combination of those same forces which in simpler combinations we call physical ; still life implies, not only something peculiar, but something which may be preserved and continued in its peculiarity. For what is life on this hypo-

thesis? Force, as we can alone conceive it, implies one who exerts it. Who then exerts those forces which in their simpler combinations give us the impressions, and produce for us the phenomena which we call respectively physical or chemical? and what may be the nature of those forces? Further, when we are told that some "change" occurs in the combination of those simpler forces, and that by the peculiar form and greater complexity of the new combination, vital phenomena are evolved; then we call to mind that axiom of thought, "Every change must have a cause." It is as useless and irrational for the positivist to try to stop inquiry here, as it would have been for a religious fanatic to have denounced inquiry at an earlier stage, when it suited the positivist to make it. Furnished as we are with the axiom I have mentioned, we can no more abstain from investigating "causes," than, being furnished with those other axioms respecting space, we could abstain from creating a science of geometry. The initial impulse of thought is given, and we must follow it. When we are told that a change has taken place in the combination of certain forces, which change constituted them vital, we are im-

pelled to ask, what was the cause of this change? what was the nature of the force that produced this new combination, and who exerted it? And the only possible reply is, "The force by which the new combination was effected, and is continued, we call vital," and "He who exerted it, is God." Thus even the most unfavourable hypothesis conducts us to the conclusion, that life is something really existent, and which may be preserved as it was created by God. Surely, then, it is not only possible, but reasonable, for even a positivist, who perceives the necessary results of his assumptions, to hold with the Christian, that the same life which once actively manifested itself here, can be preserved, and hereafter developed by the Divine agent who originally constituted it; preserved, at least, so far as to conform to those unknown conditions of vital identity which, if the simpler ones of bodily identity gave us such trouble, we may well despair of exactly determining.

But, however important it may be to discern clearly and hold distinctly the great doctrine of the resurrection of the body, it must strike every reader of St. Paul, that he is anxious to prove the

truth of this doctrine, chiefly, because in his mind it involves the perfection of the soul ; and surely we cannot be far wrong if we hazard the assertion, that at least in the Divine purpose, the preservation of the vital power depends on its connexion with the moral and rational consciousness. I don't like to state this dogmatically, because it is nowhere explicitly declared in Scripture that the resurrection of the body is a necessary result of the immortality of the soul. It is asserted that we are immortal, and that our bodies will be raised again ; but not that our bodies will be raised because our souls are immortal. The safer and more modest statement of the result of revelation is this, that our souls are immortal because God in Jesus Christ made them so ; and that our bodies will rise again, because God in Christ wills it so.

Nature and Scripture alike are full of cautions to us to beware of hasty statements on the subject of final causes. What can be more unwarrantable than the too common allegation, that because the lower animals give tokens of reason and affection, they must have an immaterial part, and having this, their bodies must rise again ? This conclusion is manifestly

arrived at, by means of assumptions as to the necessary immortality of all spirit, and the necessary connexion of such immortality with bodily resurrection, which are wholly unwarranted. Of the nature and fate of the lower animals Scripture is silent. With the exception of one or two texts, which have plainly nothing to do with the subject, no authority of Scripture has ever been adduced in support of such theories. And, as I have hinted, the analogy of nature, not less than the silence of Scripture, admonishes to caution, when we are dealing with matters beyond our ken. Thus we find that with respect to mere material changes, some organisms perish, while others, as the caterpillar, contain within them the rudiments of another and a higher material body, which in due time develops out of the ruins of the first. Why, it might be asked, should one of these creatures be made so as to perish, while another is constructed to rise again? We cannot tell—God wills it so. We know that no matter is lost in the death of one of those material organisms; and so, if the brutes perish, no spiritual substance may be destroyed; in that case the brute's personality is blotted out,

while, such is the will of God, man's personality remains.

But, truly, of the destiny of other orders of organized creatures we know, and need to know, nothing; let it suffice us to be told, on the sure testimony of God, that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption; that what was sown in weakness shall be raised in power, what was sown a natural shall be raised a spiritual body. Here is change, and yet identity; a sameness in revolution, which, perhaps, finds its most perfect analogy in our spiritual nature. As in the resurrection of the body we assert a change of the vital, so do we, in the new birth of the soul, a change of the spiritual forces. And shall we call this resurrection of the soul, the implantation of a nature distinct from the former, which has no connexion with it; or not rather, a quickening, and renewing, and sanctifying of the former, a change effected by Divine power, no doubt, but by that power as exerted upon the same spiritual subject! The new nature springs out of the ruins of the old, and though from the very necessity of a moral renovation it must be gradual and not sudden; yet its phoenix-birth

from the ashes of the perishing elements of spiritual death may well serve to illustrate the connexion which must subsist between the natural body, which is sown in weakness and ignominy, and the spiritual body, which shall be raised in glory and power !

Having thus understood what our doctrine implies, and that it involves no absolute contradiction in reason, we are in a fit state to receive the full force of the Church's testimony on this Easter-day. Before our investigation, it might have been urged that the case of a Christian is not exactly analogous to that of his Master; that we could understand how a body which had not been disintegrated and dispersed, through corruption, might rise again, and that if our resurrection involved a similar, or even a possible conception, we could feel our minds at liberty to receive comfort.

What we want is not so much a case which is strictly analogous to that of Christ, but one which is so free from intrinsic contradictions, that we can keep it calmly before our mind, while we attend to the testimony which Christ's resurrection affords to the certainty of our own.

I have endeavoured to ascertain and exhibit St. Paul's conception of a bodily resurrection ; and I humbly submit that it has been shown that this conception contains nothing so perplexing or contradictory, as to shut the mind against the reception of testimony. And if not, then I think it was shown in my first sermon from this place, that if any fact which transpired in a former age can be rendered certain to us, this fact is so, that Jesus Christ of Nazareth actually rose again from the dead. We are not talking about any doctrine which he taught, about any truth which he declared to be necessary or probable, but about an act which He really accomplished. He actually died, and was buried ; and actually, as at this time, burst his way from death's prison-house, and came again to our earth with the trophies of His victory, to assure us that He had won our release with His mighty arm, and that "death had no more dominion over us." Our faith is anchored on this fact, the veil has actually been rent from the inscrutable future ; the bars of hell have been burst asunder ; the heavens have been laid bare, and our earth now stands the visible centre of two real, though invisible spiritual worlds, which are

full of hope or dread for our future. This is so, because One has come back to us from the grave to tell its secrets ; not because of reasonings or hopes which this man may accept, or that man ridicule ; but because of this great fact, a fact which all the world can understand, and peasants as easily as kings, that on this blessed Easter morning, our great Lord rose triumphant from the grave, and was thus “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.” This is the foundation of our hope ; this was the strength of that faith which cried from the brink of the grave, cried back to us so strongly from the very shades of death, “I know whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him till that day !” “Thanks be to God,” let us respond with joy and gratitude, who “giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

O my brethren, I would call upon you, in conclusion, to endeavour to realise the wondrous future which this faith opens out to us. Think what is involved in the possession of a body which shall be the mere instrument of the mind, with no wayward tastes and contradictory appetites of its own, but formed to obey without weariness,

and suffer without injury, all the fulness of holy emotion. Here, if perchance we rise for a moment to a glimpse of that ravishing future, the feelings are so violent and overwhelming, that for our safety, even for our existence, they must be subordinated, and kept in check. But imagine a state where you may safely abandon yourself to God's love; where all the spiritual impulses can be indulged safely to the full; where they shall impel the rational and active powers to incessant scrutiny, and rejoice without bounds at every new discovery of Divine wisdom and love! That will, indeed, be "to know the length, and breadth, and depth, and height," when love knows no limit, as well as no end.

If, then, we are told by the cynic, "youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret," let us answer, even if to any extent it have been unfortunately true with us in the past, yet this is not all our possible experience; there is another life into which the end of this opens, illimitable in its prospects, grand in its capacities, and full of aspiration for ever. But, even while we answer thus, let us not forget that our present is shaping that future; that no act or word

terminates here ; that every wicked deed leaves its scar ; that every cloud of sin which gathers over our human life, darkens our heavenly crown ! Little as we habitually realise it, must it not be true, that every lightest thought is a stir in the infinite circumambient spiritual æther, a stir which shall run on in shuddering vibrations, mingling with the vast multiplex rush of such, and modifying all life for ever ?

We are the shapers of eternal destinies, our own and others ; and every wild throb of passion, every flash of feeling, every glance of thought, will leave its track for ever, like one of the wavy lines in a summer sea, which tell of ships that we cannot recall ! Oh ! those deeds that have gone on their way, like boats with their blessed or fatal freight, that have dropped down the horizon for ever ! We launched them, and spread their sails, but we cannot tell what oceans they shall sail over, nor what plagues or blessings they shall bear with them. One hand holds the helm, let us pray Him to guide them ; and oh ! my brethren, let us pray Him to guide us ! and then in all our deep distrustfulness of self, we shall feel the immovable foundation of Christ's strength grow-

ing beneath us, the everlasting defences of Christ's truth rising around us, and the celestial effulgence of Christ's love shining within us, glorifying all our past and present, all our present and future, and filling our otherwise dark and cheerless wilderness with the light of a new and better day !

THE END.

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